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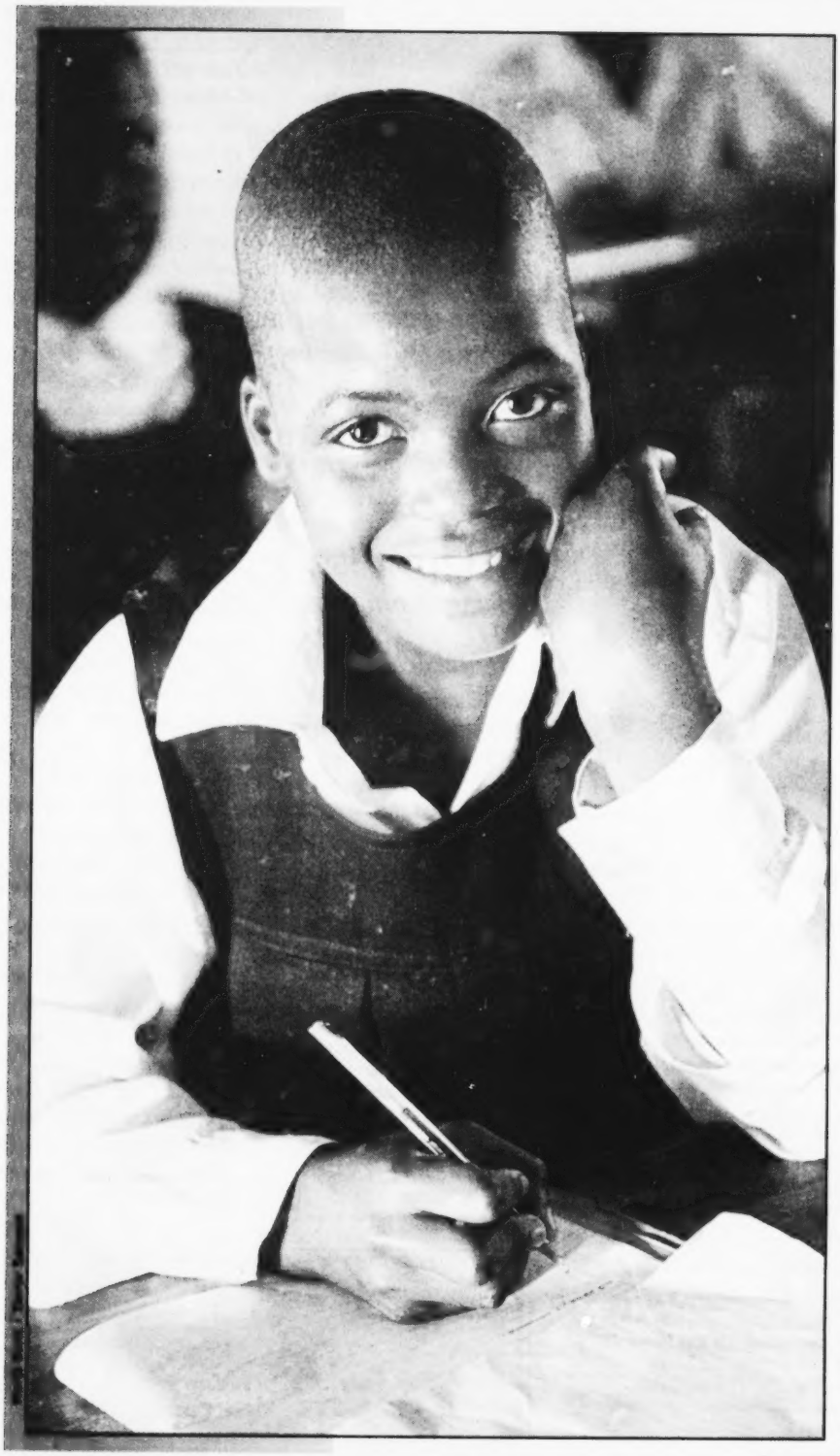

Africa struggles valiantly to reach Millennium goals

Africa has embraced the world community's ambitious Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While it has made progress in increasing school enrolment and reducing classroom disparities between girls and boys, the continent faces enormous challenges on other MDGs, including combating poverty and reducing child mortality. Donors are finally pledging more aid for Africa, with a stronger focus on the MDGs, but funding remains inadequate and uncertain.

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AFRICA RENEWAL

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Africa's media pushes for more freedom

Slowly, a tough beat gets better

By **Michael Fleshman**

In the perennial war between governments and the media over what the public should know, few battles have been fought as stubbornly as the one between the late Nigerian military ruler, Gen. Sani Abacha, and the "guerrilla journalists" of *Tell* magazine. The popular newsweekly earned the general's ire by criticizing his 1993 coup and reporting too closely on his administration's inner workings. In response, the government shuttered the magazine's offices and jailed a senior editor.

At the time, it was an all-too-familiar setback for the press in Africa, where governments frequently reacted to unfavourable news by shooting, jailing or banning the messenger.

In the case of *Tell*, however, the messengers fought back. Rather than fold its tent, the magazine went underground, operating from clandestine "bush offices" around the country. It kept one step ahead of the police and managed to continue publishing. *Tell*'s remarkable story ended happily with the restoration of democracy in 1999 and the magazine's triumphant return to its offices.

Across Africa, such conflicts are being repeated less frequently. The expansion of democratic practices, greater domestic and international support for human rights and the emergence of a vigorous and independent civil society have combined to improve the media climate.

Yet in Africa, as elsewhere across the globe, problems remain. "For doing their indispensable work, many journalists are persecuted, attacked, imprisoned and murdered," UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan declared on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day. "We salute the courage and dedication of journalists struggling against risk and outright brutality to exercise their right to seek and tell the truth."

Associated Press/ George Osodi

Newspaper vendor in Nigeria: With the spread of democracy, the climate for press freedoms has improved.

In general, says Ms. Zoe Titus, a press freedom monitor for the non-governmental Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), "The situation of the press in most of Africa has improved to a degree, at least in terms of arbitrary attacks and detentions of journalists and closures of publications and radio stations."

Fewer attacks, greater independence

The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that in 2004, the deadliest year for journalists in a decade, "fewer journalists were killed or imprisoned in Africa than in some other regions." Two journalists lost their lives in Africa that year, another was missing and feared dead and 19 others spent long periods in jail. Globally, the toll stood at 56 killed, 19 missing and 124 imprisoned for extended periods.

"The situation of the press in most of Africa has improved to a degree, at least in terms of arbitrary attacks and detentions of journalists and closures of publications and radio stations."

— Ms. Zoe Titus, Media Institute of Southern Africa

Reports reaching MISA indicate that what the CPJ has described as "the remarkable gains of recent years" for press freedom in Africa are continuing, albeit slowly and unevenly. The year 2001 remains the only one on record when no media worker was killed on the job in Africa. Journalists, broadcasters and publishers are still targeted for less severe forms of harassment — from assaults and brief jailings to threats of criminal prosecution and civil lawsuits for offences such as insulting the president or damaging state interests. Advertising boycotts and other forms of financial pressure have also been applied.

Despite such problems, progress has resulted from "the new democratic dispensations" of the past decade, Ms. Titus told *Africa Renewal*. In South Africa and some other countries, "transitions to democracy were followed by major reforms of the legislation restricting freedom of expression and the free press." Elsewhere, governments have reduced the worst forms of censorship, but keep repressive laws on the statute books.

Media diversity and independence have also improved. On a continent where state monopolies of print and broadcast media were once common, private and community-owned radio stations and newspapers proliferate (see page 4). Technological advances, such as the arrival of

turn to page 21

Community radio: a voice for the poor

Better local communications can boost development, democracy

By **Itai Madamombe**

Their transmitters may reach only a few miles, but community radio stations are enabling isolated communities across Africa to voice their own concerns. On air, ordinary citizens discuss issues that are central to them, such as gender relations and combatting HIV/AIDS. They share farming tips and income generation ideas and explore ways to improve education.

"Development work at times can be like sleepwalking in fog," Ms. Denise Gray-Felder, president of the Communication for Social Change Consortium, told *Africa Renewal*. "You know you're not where you are supposed to be, and you can sense motion … but it is unclear exactly where you're headed. A frequently missing 'guidepost' in development work is local voice. Community radios provide profound new opportunities for more inclusive sustainable development." Her organization is an international nonprofit group that helps poor and marginalized communities use communications to improve their lives.

Millions in Africa remain voiceless, despite a multitude of new information outlets. Most media remain largely state controlled. But the tide of democracy sweeping the continent has seen governments loosening their grip on the airwaves. In 1985, notes the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC, by its French initials), there were fewer than 10 independent radio stations on the entire continent. Today, South Africa alone has more than 150 community stations, and other countries are catching up.

Information infrastructure

The idea of accelerating development by using both older media such as radio and newer information and communication technologies has gained momentum in Africa over the past decade. The continent's development blueprint, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), places information technologies high among its priorities. Governments agree that good Internet, telecommunications and broadcasting services can foster regional trade and improve integration into the global economy. The ability of ordinary people to communicate with each other also helps promote democracy and good governance.

The cost of setting up communications infrastructure is steep, however, especially in rural areas, where distances are vast and population densities are low. Most areas outside the major towns do not have the electricity necessary for operating land telephones or computers. Radios, by contrast, are inexpensive and can run on batteries or solar power. As a result, radio is by far the dominant mass medium in Africa. There is one radio receiver for every five people (compared with one telephone for every 100 people).

The content of radio programmes is also "cheap to create and cheap to consume," says Ms. Grace Githaiga, executive director of EcoNews Africa. This is especially important in countries with high illiteracy rates and where many rural people speak primarily local, indigenous languages. "Neither the creators nor the consumers of radio content need to be able to read or write, due to the oral nature of the radio," Ms. Githaiga adds.

Despite radio's advantages, cautions Ms. Sylvia Biraahwa Nakabuku of the Uganda Media Women's Association, the medium has some limitations. After examining the role of radio in promoting better farming methods, she concluded that people can learn only so much without physical demonstration. Radio, therefore, is best used to complement rather than substitute for agricultural extension workers.

'The radio has changed our lives'

According to AMARC, the broadcasters' association, community media should have a social agenda, and not be driven by purely commercial motivations. They should involve community decision-making and participation. While the impact of local radio stations varies, they often give isolated villages — many of which are not reached by public broadcasting — a means of education, self-expression and communication, while also promoting the community's history, music and oral traditions.

"The radio has changed our lives. It makes us feel part of Mali," says a listener in Kolondieba, a cotton-growing community in that West African country. "Before, we listened to the radios of Côte d'Ivoire. Now we can keep up to date with what is happening here. We get information on cotton farming. We can put announcements on the radio to tell our relatives about important events. We can listen to

Getty Images / AFP / Amy Nabul

Through community radio stations, listeners in remote rural areas can hear news, practical information and the views of their neighbours.

our village music." The station, Radio Benso, has served the community since 1999 as part of the Mali-South Rural Radio Revival Project, an initiative that gave birth to four stations, each serving about a half a million people within a 100 kilometre radius.

Mali has one of the strongest community radio networks in Africa. After the fall of the last one-party regime in 1991 and the end to an outright state monopoly of the means of communications, the information media blossomed. Today, Mali has more than 110 private radio stations; 86 of them are community radios, mostly rurally based.

In Zambia, a community radio project funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) is helping local communities adopt safer reproductive health care practices. The initiative is reaching as many as 600,000 people through a popular radio programme called "Kumuzi Kwathu" ("in Our Village").

"Traditional birth attendants are taking more precautions because they have heard on the radio that safe practices will prevent infections during delivery," says Mrs. Jessie Tembo, a member of a village group trained as attendants. "People are keen on learning best practices from other villages that radio is connecting us to — there is no more rushing to hospitals in the dead of night. We know how to deliver a baby safely."

Individual empowerment

Positive change is also happening at a personal level. Radio projects bring opportunities for community members to learn new skills, thus improving prospects for employment at commercial stations. In southern Mali, local technicians, facilitators and producers, as well as board members, took a training course run by a rural radio centre in Burkina Faso. Participants learned to operate equipment, produce programmes and manage a station. International organizations such as the Agence de la Francophonie and the Panos Institute have also conducted community media workshops.

In Niger, Ms. Marie Ekaney's daily routine was similar to that of most mothers in the village of Ingall. But working with a solar-powered radio station has boosted the confidence and social standing of this mother of five. Each week now, Ms. Ekaney spends four days interviewing local women on health and family matters and gets people to share information on income-generating activities such as traditional mat weaving. The community now holds her in high regard.

"I wanted to help develop my village," Ms. Ekaney explained to UN Works, a website which profiles stories of people who have benefited from the organization's efforts around the globe. "My sister and mother-in-law look after the children while I prepare my programmes and go on air."

Funding handicap

According to AMARC, community media should not entail outsiders doing something for the community, but community members doing something for themselves. This implies owning and controlling the means of communication. But in Africa, few community radio stations are yet self-sustaining. When donor funding for a programme dries up, it usually spells the end of the project.

Photo: Jack Sanders

A private radio station in Senegal. Independent radio outlets help give voice to ordinary people.

Exceptions do exist, especially in urban areas. The Soweto Community Radio in South Africa was set up with funding from the Communication Assistance Foundation, a Dutch organization that supports media diversity. After the two-year funding period, the station had become self-sufficient through income generated from advertisements.

Across the continent, most community radios are funded primarily by external donor countries, church organizations, international development agencies and some advertising. Stations also rely on voluntary services, leaving them perpetually struggling to develop new talent as staff members move on. AMARC President Steve Buckley notes that state subsidies of community media are the norm in Europe and North America, but largely absent in Africa.

While accepting external funding can be limiting, it does not always entail relinquishing the all critical decision-making power to the funder. The Netherlands and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization provided funding for southern Mali stations, but local people have been involved at all stages, including the project's initial design. The villagers themselves constructed the stations' buildings, drawing on their own resources and labour. The stations are managed by a board of directors and a committee elected by the community. The staff is hired locally.

A scarcity of funding does mean, however, that small community radios generally operate with the barest of equipment. Stations are also isolated by a shortage of transport and telephones. Cell phones are helping somewhat, but are expensive. Access to the Internet is still a dream for many in rural areas.

Despite such constraints, these stations are helping to shift the communications balance from a distant voice controlled from the top, to one in which the voices of marginalized and poor populations can at last be heard. ■

African women battle for equality

Some progress 10 years after Beijing, but major challenges remain

By **Gumisai Mutume**

A decade ago, African women had reason to expect change following a much-heralded global conference that set ambitious targets to transform the lives of women across the world. This year marks the 10th anniversary of that milestone event, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in 1995. Like their counterparts elsewhere, African women are taking stock of progress and asking to what extent promised reforms have been implemented. They are also examining why progress has been limited in many countries and are seeking ways to overcome the obstacles.

During the last 30 years there have been a number of signs of improvement, UN Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women Rachel Mayanja told the 10-year review of the Beijing conference, in New York in March. There have been moves to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a UN protocol, as well as the development of new policies and guidelines and creation of networks of gender experts, she said, citing just a few examples.

However, over the same 30 years since the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City, "men have gone to the moon and back, yet women are still at the same place they were — that is, trying to sensitize the world to the unwarranted and unacceptable marginalization of women, which deprives them of their human rights," Ms. Mayanja told the delegates, who came from 165 countries.

In Africa specifically, women have made significant strides in the political arena over the past few years. The continental political body, the African Union (AU), took a major step by promoting gender parity in its top decision-making positions. In 2003 five women and five men were elected as AU commissioners. The following year, Ms. Gertrude Mongella was chosen to head the AU's Pan-African Parliament, where women make up 25 per cent of members. Another AU body, the African Peer Review Mechanism, which oversees standards for good governance, is led by Ms. Marie-Angélique Savané.

African women have also successfully promoted agreements that advance their rights. By the end of last year, 51 of the 53 AU member countries had ratified CEDAW, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and often described as the international bill of rights for women. And in 2003 activists succeeded in persuading their heads of state to adopt a protocol on the rights of women. They are now lobbying states to take the final step and ratify the protocol to make it enforceable (see box, page 9).

Obstacles persist

"We are all aware that despite achievements and progress made, African women face major challenges and obstacles," says Dr. Farkhonda Hassan, chair of the UN Economic Commission for Africa's Committee on Women and Development. For example, she says, the primary development policies in many countries, known as poverty reduction strategies, still do not take into account differences in income and power between men and women, hampering efforts to finance programmes that reduce inequality. In addition, she says, the majority of African women are still denied education and employment, and have limited opportunities in trade, industry and government.

Out of the 1995 conference emerged a plan, the Beijing Platform of Action, which laid out areas that needed improvement if the position of women was to be improved. The areas include reducing poverty among women, stopping violence, providing access to education and health care and reducing economic and political

'Equality is still not a reality'

From 28 February to 11 March 2005, as part of the 49th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, more than 80 government ministers, 1,800 other government delegates and 2,600 representatives of non-governmental organizations, from 165 countries, convened in New York for the 10-year Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

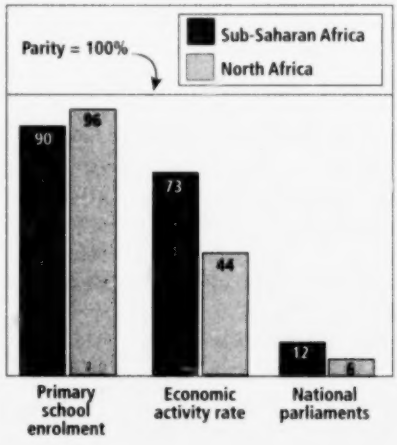
"Ten years after Beijing, this review called attention to the many areas where women's equality is still not a reality — continuing high rates of violence against women in all parts of the world, including in armed conflict, increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS among women, gender inequality in employment, lack of sexual and reproductive health rights and a lack of equal access under the law to land and property, to name a few," said Ms. Carolyn Hannan, director of the UN's Division for the Advancement of Women.

The meeting adopted a declaration calling for the "full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action ... essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration."

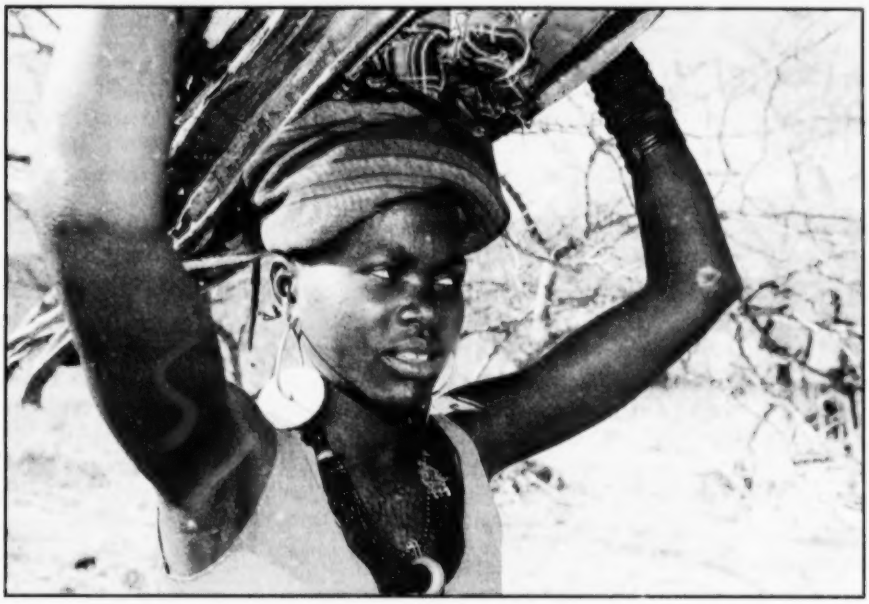
So far, four international conferences on women have been held — Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995).

Gender disparities in Africa, 2001

ratio of female to male participation, %



Source: UN Research Institute for Social Development, Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World, 2005



Panos / Crispin Hughes

African women continue to face not only widespread poverty, but also heavy labour burdens.

inequality. Barring some notable exceptions, progress in these areas has been slow.

The Beijing platform should no longer be viewed as a set of simple goals and aspirations, says Ms. Hassan, but must be used as a tool to push for the adoption of gender-sensitive policies. "The objective now is not to renegotiate our dreams, but to emphasize the accountability of all actors through detailed discussions of goals, targets, achievements and failures," she says. "We are no longer seeking promises, but are demanding action."

Poverty has a woman's face

For many African women, the Beijing platform and the various international instruments their governments have signed have yet to translate into positive changes in their daily lives. They remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy, with poor access to land, credit, health and education. While some of the agreements that African governments have ratified enshrine property and inheritance rights, in most countries women are denied those very rights.

Compounding the situation are setbacks such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic that is destroying the health of more women than men in Africa, eroding some of the development gains women had attained. As a result, poverty in Africa continues to wear a woman's face, notes Ms. Gladys Mutukwa of the Zimbabwe-based non-governmental organization Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF). She finds it disturbing that 10 years after Beijing, African women are much poorer.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of people living in poverty dropped in all developing regions except Africa, where it increased by more than 82 million. Women make up the majority of the poor, as much as 70 per cent in some countries. More often than not, men are more likely to find a job and enterprises run by men have easier access to support from institutions such as banks.

A UN Food and Agricultural Organization study on Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe shows that women rarely own land. When they do, their holdings tend to be smaller and less fertile than those of men. Studies also show that if women farmers had the same access to inputs and training as males, overall yields could be raised by between 10 and 20 per cent.

Getting girls into school

But perhaps the most inhibiting factor is that women in Africa continue to be denied an education, often the only ticket out of poverty. Disparities between girls and boys start in primary school and the differences widen up through the entire educational system. In total enrolment in primary education, Africa registered the highest relative increase among regions during the last decade. But given the low proportion of girls being enrolled, the continent is still far from the goal of attaining intake parity by the end of this year. By 2000, sub-Saharan Africa was the region with the most girls out of school, 23 million, up from 20 million a decade earlier.

The total number of children out of school has declined during the last decade. Between 1990 and 2000, worldwide enrolment in primary education increased from 596 million to 648 million, with the highest increase occurring in sub-Saharan Africa, which recorded a 38 per cent rise.

Policies specifically targeting girls were responsible for considerable improvements in countries such as Benin, Botswana, the Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Mauritania and Namibia. In Benin, for instance, the gender gap narrowed from 32 to 22 per cent, thanks to policies such as sensitizing parents through the media and reducing school fees for girls in public primary schools in rural areas.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that girls' enrolments rise relative to boys as the proportion of female teachers increases. Therefore an effective method of ensuring gender parity is to equalize the gender balance among teachers, a strategy Mauritania used to narrow the gender gap in primary schools from 13 to 4 per cent between 1990 and 2000.

Guinea employed a broader approach, making girls' education a national priority during the early 1990s. After assessing the challenges faced by girls in schools, the government embarked on programmes to build latrines, assist pregnant students, distribute free textbooks and increase the number of female teachers. By 2000, the

country had more than doubled the number of girls in school and increased boys' attendance by 80 per cent. But in general, Africa has the lowest proportion of female teachers of any region.

Numerous other hurdles continue to hamper the expansion of education in Africa. Austerity programmes introduced in many countries during the 1980s constrained educational spending. Governments had little money to maintain existing schools or build new ones. At the family level, households that became poorer often faced the stark choice of deciding whom to send to school — and often it was the girl who stayed home. Costs of tuition, the requirement to wear uniforms, long distances between home and school, inadequate water and sanitation, all help to restrict girls' access to education.

By the time children go through high school and reach college, the gender gap has become even wider. "At the tertiary and university levels the low participation for women continues," declared African government ministers gathered in Addis Ababa in October to take stock of the continent's progress since Beijing. "Gender gaps are particularly pronounced in science, mathematics and computer sciences."

As with a range of other historically male-dominated subjects, an International Labour Organization (ILO) survey shows that women are starkly underrepresented in technical programmes in African colleges. The share of women enrolled in polytechnic courses ranges from 40 per cent in the Gambia to just 2 per cent in Zambia, the ILO reports. In Ghana, even though 30 per cent of all those attending polytechnics are women, only 1 per cent of the total taking technical courses are women.

Africa, however, has registered improvements in adult literacy rates, which rose 20 per cent between 1990 and 2000. The goal is to raise adult literacy rates by 50 per cent by 2015, from the 1990 level. About half of sub-Saharan African countries have registered moderate increases towards gender parity in this area, UNESCO reports. However, in some countries the female illiteracy rates are much higher than the regional average of about 50 per cent. In Burkina Faso it is 82 per cent, in Sierra Leone 79 per cent and in Benin and Ethiopia 77 per cent.

Since the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City "women are still at the same place they were — that is, trying to sensitize the world to the unwarranted and unacceptable marginalization of women, which deprives them of their human rights," says UN Special Adviser on Gender Issues Rachel Mayanja.

Channelling money to women

Many now acknowledge that to enable women to escape poverty, development policies should place more emphasis on their contributions to the economy. Even though women make up a significant proportion of the economically active population, their contribution is not fully recorded because they are mainly engaged in family farming or in the informal sector. In other cases, what they do, such as household work, is not considered an economic activity.

In agriculture, sub-Saharan Africa's most vital economic sector, women contribute 60–80 per cent of labour in food production, both for household consumption and for sale. But while they do most of the work, they lack access to markets and credit. In Uganda, women make up 53 per cent of the labour force, but only sell 11 per cent of the cash crops.

"I strongly hold the view that since days immemorial, women have played and continue to play a significant role in the economic and social development of their countries," says Namibia's Women's Affairs Minister Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah. "What is at stake is that they are not visible, not recognized and not rewarded for the hard work they do." She says that each country should allocate a percentage of its national budget to gender issues. "This request is based on the fact that to date no country allocates more than 1 per cent of its national budget to women and gender issues." Currently, resources for national programmes for the advancement of women come mainly from external partners.

Ms. Josephine Ouédraogo of the African Centre for Women in Addis Ababa says women's contributions through the household economy, which provides more than 70 per cent of food in Africa, are not adequately counted in national statistics. "Less than 10 African countries conduct systematic time-use or household surveys," she says. This makes it difficult to

Providing women with greater access to credit and other sources of financing can help reduce economic disparities.

ILO / A. Fiorelli

Campaign to ratify women's protocol

Gender activists are intensifying efforts to obtain the minimum 15 ratifications needed to bring into force a protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights aimed at promoting gender equality. Once in effect, the Protocol on the Rights of Women would provide a legal framework for women's rights and require states to develop laws that prohibit discrimination.

The protocol states that every woman has the right "to the recognition and protection of her human and legal rights." It includes articles on equality in marriage, access to justice and political participation, protection of women in armed conflict and the provision of education, training and health care. It also upholds women's rights to housing and inheritance. The rights of widows and the special protection of elderly women and those with disabilities are also covered. The protocol contains guidelines on ending traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, which it condemns as harmful to the health of women and girls. Signatories will have to report periodically on progress and to provide financial resources to implement the rights enshrined in the protocol.

"For African populations and societies, the absence of a legal framework of reference to fight against violations of women's rights currently constitutes a real handicap for the optimal participation of women in the development of their countries and of Africa," writes Ms. Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson of the non-governmental Women in Law and Development in Africa. She notes that economic and social rights that are constantly violated, either deliberately or out of ignorance, would be better protected under the protocol.

identify disparities between the sexes and design remedial policies.

To redress the bias in macroeconomic policies that favours men and boys at the expense of women and girls, a number of African countries have adopted a tool known as gender budgeting (see *Africa Recovery*, April 2002). Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda are among the countries currently assessing their budgets along gender lines. This involves analyzing government spending choices and their impact on women and men, boys and girls, with the aim of better identifying disparities. That in turn can help mobilize more financing to narrow the gaps, for example by funding programmes to reduce the heavy time burdens on women or by improving their access to energy, water, transport and labour-saving technologies.

At a meeting in April 2004 to review women's progress since Beijing, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) called on its 14 member countries to adopt gender budgeting by December 2006.

Influencing policy

Almost all SADC countries have a national government body that deals with gender issues. However, in the 10 years since Beijing, these units, departments or ministries "have become weak and unable to be responsive to the challenges presented by the struggle for gender justice," NGOs declared at an African Social Forum in Lusaka, Zambia. "Poor resource bases, few staff and no power or authority within governments to advance equality and justice for women are just a few of the constraints."

"The objective now is not to renegotiate our dreams, but to emphasize the accountablility of all actors.... We are no longer seeking promises, but are demanding action."

— Ms. Farkhonda Hassan, UN Economic Commission for Africa

However, women in some countries in Southern Africa have moved into positions of political influence. In South Africa and Mozambique, for example, women hold 30 per cent of the seats in parliament. In February 2004, Mozambique became the first country in the region to appoint a woman as prime minister, Ms. Luisa Diogo. In Rwanda, women lead the world in representation in national parliaments. There, 49 per cent of parliamentarians are female, far more than the 30 per cent target specified in Beijing. The world average is just 15 per cent.

In 14 of 23 recent elections in African countries, women increased their parliamentary representation. Still, the situation is far from ideal. In the majority of these countries (20), women hold 10 per cent or less of parliamentary seats. In Madagascar, Mauritania and Niger, for example, they occupy less than 5 per cent of seats.

In some countries, the presence of women in parliament has made a difference in the adoption of gender-sensitive policies. Because of pressure from women, some countries now have affirmative action policies, such as quotas, to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. In South Africa, women parliamentarians succeeded in passing various pieces of legislation, such as those legalizing abortion, countering domestic violence and ensuring child support.

In Uganda, women parliamentarians helped to adopt legislation making rape a capital offence. In 2003, following a long delay, Mozambique passed a family law considered pivotal for the emancipation of women in that country. "If we had just one sex in parliament, the bill would have been weaker," says the country's higher education minister, Ms. Lidia Brito.

Because the continent is so diverse, the problems are very complex, says Ms. Wariaru Mbugua of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues at the UN. "Therefore, in global debates, they should not be made simplistic or be reduced to a single denominator." For example, girls not only need access to primary education, but must also be protected from violence and harmful practices.

While there is a need to continue with basic strategies to lift women out of poverty and to halt HIV/AIDS, Ms. Mbugua says, "it is also important to put in place second- and third-generation strategies." These include ensuring that global trade agreements and new information and communications technologies provide immediate benefits to women. Empowerment of women, she says, should not be confined to a narrow range of sectors within countries, but should also "ensure the equal participation of women in fast-moving global processes." ■

Giant step for Kenya's schools

Progress for both boys and girls towards Millennium education goal

By **Michael Fleshman**

The first day of classes at the Doonholm Primary School, near Nairobi, in January 2003 was more than the usual uproar of returning students, anxious parents and impatient teachers. Just weeks earlier, Headmaster Margaret Ayiemba told *Africa Renewal*, the newly elected Kenyan government had announced the abolition of school fees, and "the teachers were not really prepared. We didn't know what would happen." Could the school accommodate the expected surge of new arrivals? More than 200 eager new students did arrive, adding to nearly 1,300 already squeezed into the existing facilities.

And so Mrs. Ayiemba and her staff did what thousands of other Kenyan educators did on that day: improvise. Class sizes soared — sometimes to twice their previous number. Where previously a child was fortunate to be able to take a book home to study once in a week, the wait became two. Desks, pencils and paper, already in short supply, were stretched still further. Teachers hastily organized remedial programmes for the many older students seeking to enter Standard 1 — among the influx of poorer students previously barred from Doonholm by the cost.

Two years later, Mrs. Ayiemba said, the school still suffers from overcrowding and shortages, and many of the poorer children attend school hungry, because Doonholm has not been able to finance a feeding programme. There is an urgent need for everything from teachers and books to classrooms and toilets. "Still," she concluded, "the parents are happy because there are no fees. The children can finally go to school and we have been able to maintain academic standards despite these problems. I can say from our side that the ending of school fees has been a success."

Big stride forward

In all, some 1.3 million new students flooded into Kenya's primary schools that day in January 2003, making good on a key election campaign promise by the new president, Mr. Mwai Kibaki, and taking the East African country a big step closer to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for education. The goals, adopted by world leaders in New York in September 2000, set ambitious international poverty-reduction and development targets (see page 12). In education, the MDGs require countries to provide a complete primary education for all children by 2015, reduce adult illiteracy and achieve gender parity at all levels of education by the end of this year, or no later than 2015.

"Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS."

— Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General

The economic and social benefits of providing universal primary education and eliminating gender disparities are now widely recognized. Speaking at the launch of a non-governmental report on girls' education in March, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that "study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation."

A 2002 analysis published by the University of Munich, in Germany, estimated that eliminating the gender gap in education in Mali would prevent 35,000 infant deaths annually. A World Bank study that year argued that Africa's gender gap in education had, by 1992, cost the continent nearly a percentage point in annual per capita growth since 1960.

Despite the benefits, it was only at the 1990 Education for All conference in Jomtien, Thailand, that a global commitment to universal primary education and gender parity was adopted (see *Africa Recovery*, July 2000). The targets agreed to at Jomtien were adopted by the UN Millennium Assembly a decade later and became the MDGs in education.

In Kenya, the elimination of school fees, an obstacle to education for impoverished families in many African countries, has, at a stroke, put the country "on track" to reach the MDG enrolment and gender parity objectives, at least in primary education. In 2004 the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimated that the country's total primary school enrolment was nearly 7.4 million, compared to less than 6 million in the Millennium year of 2000. Equally impressive has been Kenya's success in reducing dropout rates — from 4.9 per cent in 1999 to just 2 per cent in 2003 — despite the difficulties that followed the introduction of free education.

Although the ratio of girls to boys has dropped slightly in recent years, it remains among the best in the region, with 94 girls enrolled for every 100 boys. Analysts also note that Kenya is among the few African countries where a greater proportion of all school-aged girls, 73 per cent, enroll in primary education than do boys, 71 per cent of whom attend classes.

The cost of 'free' education

Despite the dramatic expansion in primary enrolment, however, over 1.7 million school-aged children remain outside the education system. Many of these are nomadic pastoralists in the dry and sparsely populated northeast, where only about one in four children attends school and gender disparities are great, with fewer than one in five girls enrolled. To reach these students, the government, together with UNICEF and other donors, is experimenting with a range of innovative but costly projects. These include mobile classrooms, greater numbers of

boarding schools and feeding schemes, and outreach to parents and community leaders about the importance of providing their children — particularly their daughters — with a formal education.

There are other obstacles as well. UNICEF estimates that Kenya currently needs 31,000 additional primary school teachers. The agency also asserts that inefficient and antiquated work rules have left the existing teaching staff under-utilized. In many schools, headmasters are diverting funds for supplies and construction to hire more teachers, or asking parents for the same. This could increase [illegible] and might price [illegible] out of school again. The [illegible]age is worsened [illegible]demic, which has hit [illegible] and other professional staff particularly hard.

Reaching and maintaining gender parity also poses special challenges. In an exhaustive study of strategies for attracting African girls to school and keeping them there, World Bank researcher Eileen Kane reported in 2004 that girls' enrolment and dropout rates are much more likely than those of boys to be affected by circumstances such as the distance to school, class size, adequate sanitary facilities, school security and lunch programmes. The absence of female teachers has also been a disincentive for girls and their parents.

These factors, combined with high poverty rates, early marriage and the need for household labour on the farm or at home, contribute to higher drop-out rates among older girls. Education Ministry statistics show that while a greater percentage of boys drop out of school in standards 1–5, girls are more likely to leave in standards 6–8. Identifying and designing programmes to reach the remaining out-of-school population and keep girls in school could prove to be a difficult and expensive undertaking for the country's overstretched education sector.

Kenya's progress in education has already come at a stiff price. In 2003, government spending on primary education jumped by over 360 per cent and overall spending on education and training reached an estimated $420 mn — nearly 30 per cent of all government outlays that year. Spending on primary education doubled again in 2004 and is slated for a 19 per cent increase this year, as the government and its development partners struggle to keep pace with the expanded demand for teachers, books and classrooms. Public investment in primary schooling has increased more than tenfold since 2002, in what Education Minister George Saitoti described in April as a sign of the government's commitment to achieving the MDGs.

Ambitious agenda

In an April presentation to educators and donors in Nairobi, Mr. Saitoti outlined an ambitious education and training programme that goes beyond primary education to include major improvements in secondary, vocational and higher education. "Education is critical to the development and protection of democratic institutions and human rights," he noted. "Kenya has therefore prioritized investments in human capital development, particularly in education and health as key pillars in the overall economic recovery strategies." The introduction of free primary education was a vital first step towards reaching those objectives, he said, and also "an important step towards reduction of the education cost burden to the households in terms of fees and levies."

Secondary education is an immediate priority, as Kenya's education stakeholders consider how to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of new primary school students who will seek places in secondary school in a few years. In 2003, fewer than one in three eligible students found places in a secondary school. With 93 girls enrolled for every 100 boys, the gender gap too is slightly wider than in primary education.

Achieving gender parity at every level of education is a key requirement of the MDGs. But in countries like Kenya, with a comparatively good gender balance but low enrolment, UNICEF observes in its 2005 *Report Card on Gender Parity and Primary Education*, "gender parity cannot be much more than a statistical quirk." The key challenge is to increase enrolment.

Expanding access to secondary schools — where fees are still charged — is particularly difficult in Kenya and other poor countries, however. In the year that Kenya made primary education free, it spent more on debt service payments than on education, health and clean water supply combined.

Unable to eliminate secondary school fees, the government is focusing on rebuilding dilapidated infrastructure, improving teacher training and management and seeking ways to reduce costs. One proposal under study is to develop a national fee structure to prevent local school boards

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With the abolition of primary school fees, 1.3 million new students have poured into Kenya's schools.

Africa and the challenge of the Millennium Development Goals

Ed Kashi/UNDP/Panos Pictures

MDGs

World leaders gathered at the Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000 adopted an ambitious set of goals aimed at achieving measurable progress towards reducing poverty and improving human well-being across the globe. They recognized the particular needs of Africa, the world's poorest region, which lags behind on virtually every major indicator of development. They will return to New York in September 2005 to review what must be done to achieve the goals.

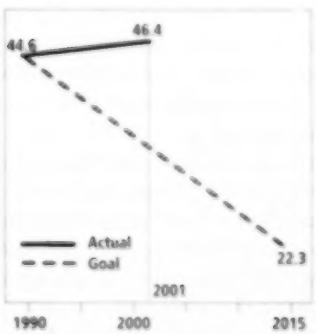
There is growing international concern that while Africa has made some modest progress in a few areas, it will not be able to even approach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the target year of 2015 — unless both African countries and the international community mobilize far more efforts and resources. Here we provide a snapshot of the trends in sub-Saharan Africa on a number of the key targets, from 1990 to the present, and indicate the course the region should be on to meet the goals.

1. Cut in half, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day.

While the proportion of very poor people in all developing countries fell from 27.9 per cent in 1990 to 21.3 per cent in 2001, the percentage in sub-Saharan Africa has risen. This has also meant that the number of poor Africans climbed from 227 million to 313 million during the same period.

Sub-Saharan Africa

People living on less than $1 a day, %

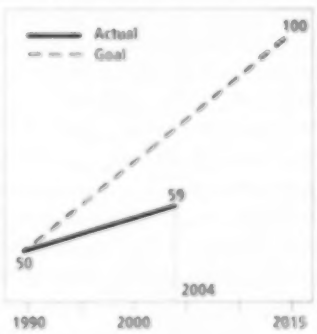


Source: UN Africa Renewal from data in UN, Millennium Development Goals Report 2005

2. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Children completing primary school, %



Source: UN Africa Renewal from data in IMF/ World Bank Global Monitoring Report 2005

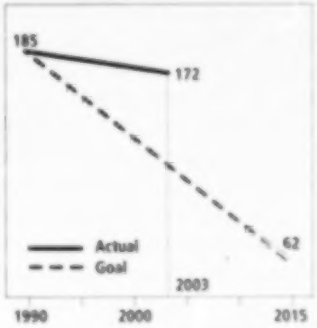
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of girls in primary education, in relation to boys, increased from 83% to 86% between 1990/91 and 2001/02; the goal is to reach 100% in primary schools, preferably by 2005, and in secondary and higher education by 2015. The share of women in non-agricultural labour rose from 32% to 36% between 1990 and 2003, while the proportion of women members of national legislatures doubled from 7% in 1990 to 14% in 2005.

Panos / Hannah Wilson

Sub-Saharan Africa

Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)



Source: UN Africa Renewal from data in UN, Millennium Development Goals Report 2005

UN Photo / DPI

4. **Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the mortality rate for children under five years old.**

5. **Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality rate.**

Because of poor data, the mortality rate in 1990 in most regions is not accurately known. However, in 2000, the rate in sub-Saharan Africa (expressed as the number of women dying during childbirth out of every 100,000 live births) was 920, more than twice the 450 average for all developing countries.

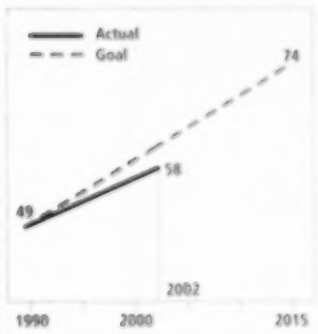
6. **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.**

Although the HIV prevalence rate has stabilized in recent years, it remains the highest in the world. Seven out of every 100 adults are living with HIV. AIDS is the leading cause of premature death in sub-Saharan Africa. Malaria is also a widespread problem, with 90% of the 1 million malaria deaths each year occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

Associated Press / John McConnico

Sub-Saharan Africa

Population using improved sources of drinking water, %

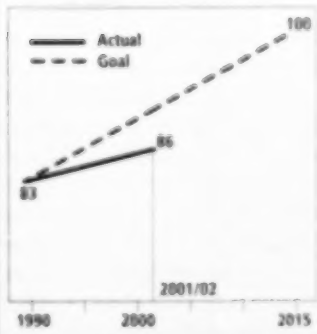


Source: UN Africa Renewal from data in UN, Millennium Development Goals Report 2005

7. **Ensure environmental sustainability. Reverse the loss of environmental resources. Cut in half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.**

Sub-Saharan Africa

Number of girls per 100 boys in primary school



Source: UN Africa Renewal from data in UN, Millennium Development Goals Report 2005

8. **Develop a global partnership for development.**

This would include establishing an open, rule-based and non-discriminatory trading and financial system, addressing the special needs of least developed countries, dealing comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems and making the benefits of new technologies more accessible.

from page 11

from charging high fees to keep poorer students out. The government is also experimenting with the use of secondary day schools instead of the traditional boarding schools to make secondary education more affordable. In an effort to keep older girls and young women in school, the government no longer expels pregnant students and guarantees a classroom seat for returning mothers.

The pattern of reduced access and increased gender disparities continues in the country's 23 public and private universities. Of the nearly 80,000 scholars

Completing junior secondary school in South Africa. Gender disparities are greater in Africa's secondary schools and universities.

enrolled in university, over 44,000 are men compared to fewer than 36,000 women, or 82 women for every 100 men. It is now widely accepted that reaching gender parity in higher education will not be possible by the end of 2005. It could prove to be among the most difficult hurdles to cross in Kenya's race to reach its Millennium objectives in education.

Solid progress

Kenya's rapid progress in education, UN Development Programme economist Jan Vandemoortele told *Africa Renewal* in New York, is an example of how quickly improvements can come when MDGs are integrated into national development strategies, enjoy strong political backing and receive even modest support from donors. "It is important to remember that the MDGs are global goals. It was never intended that each country would reach all of the MDGs at the same time. That is unrealistic. At country level, the MDGs are prioritized according to national development objectives and national circumstances. That is how they are supposed to work."

Nor is Kenya the only African country making strides towards universal primary education and gender parity. Last year the World Bank reported that 12 sub-Saharan African countries were on track to provide all children with a full primary education and that 19 countries had gender parity ratios above 90 per cent. The Gambia, for example, began a 15-year overhaul of its education system in 1988. Education spending increased 10 per cent annually during that period, and primary education absorbed nearly half of the budget. The impact on girls was dramatic, with enrolment doubling from 36 per cent in 1980 to 75 per cent in 2000 — almost equalling the 77 per cent rate for boys. The Gambia is now considered likely to achieve the MDGs in education by 2015.

Even some countries not on track to reach the education MDGs have made significant progress. In 1989, only 9 per cent of Guinean girls completed their primary schooling and just 24 per cent of boys. That year the government adopted an education adjustment programme to expand and improve its schools. Over the next decade, some 1,500 new primary schools were built, the number of teachers doubled and educational spending rose sharply. Political, religious and community leaders were enlisted to promote the education effort and gender equity committees were created at local, provincial and national levels to close the gender gap.

The results have been impressive. Girls' primary enrolment rose from 17 per cent in 1990 to 51 per cent in 2001, and the number of women teachers and administrators has also risen. Last year girls and young women occupied 40 per cent of seats in the Guinean education system at all levels. Although Guinea still has far to go before it reaches the classroom MDGs, experts note that the country has come a long way. In their view, Guinea's comprehensive approach and its strong political commitment to education even during periods of conflict makes it a success story even if the country misses the 2015 deadline.

Lagging behind

Despite advances in many African countries, however, the subcontinent as a whole is making only slow progress. In conflict-battered West and Central Africa, only 58 per cent of the region's children attend primary school, the lowest percentage in the world. The regional gender parity ratio is also the lowest, with just 90 girls in school for every 100 boys. In 10 of the region's 21 countries, the ratio of girls to boys is below 85 per cent, and just five countries are considered likely to reach gender parity in primary education by the end of this year.

In East and Southern Africa, 12 of the region's 22 countries are on track to achieve gender parity this year. But the good news is tempered by the area's low primary school enrolment rate, which is expected to be just 65 per cent at year-end. Overall, some 45 million children in sub-Saharan Africa are not attending primary school, more than in South Asia, which has a larger population, and almost 40 per cent of the global total.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in education is still possible in Africa and in other developing regions, UNICEF insists, if national governments and the international community make them a priority. The children's agency estimates that reaching the education MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the areas lagging farthest behind, would cost an additional $5.6 bn a year through 2015. "Let no one claim . . . that the goal of universal primary education is beyond us," UNICEF concludes in its education report. "It is realistic, it is affordable, it is achievable. And it is our children's birthright." ■

Focusing aid on Africa's own priorities

More financing for Millennium Development Goals, but still far to go

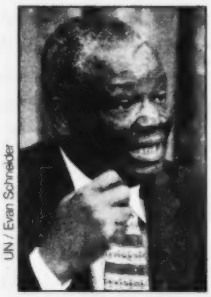
By **Ernest Harsch**

When the government of the African island nation of Madagascar decided last year to apply for assistance under the US's new supplementary aid programme, the Millennium Challenge Account, it chose to break with standard practice. Instead of simply asking government ministries to suggest potential projects, the Malagasy authorities consulted civil society groups, local businesses and farmers' associations. They encountered two recurrent complaints from farmers and small-scale businesspeople: that it is very difficult to get either bank loans or official titles to land.

So when Madagascar submitted its proposal to the US in October 2004, it centred on the problems of rural people. Six months later, Madagascar became the first country anywhere to gain approval for funding under the US programme, to the tune of nearly $110 mn over a four-year period.

The strategy, said President Marc Ravalomanana at the April 2005 signing ceremony in Washington, DC, is Madagascar's own. "This is a vision which aims to strengthen the rural communities, to build industries and commerce suitable to the rural areas and then to create economic growth from the bottom up." He noted that 13 million of Madagascar's 17 million people live on less than one dollar a day, and that many of them live in the countryside. By strengthening rural incomes, Madagascar will be able to reduce its very high poverty rate, one of the key targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2000.

The decision of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which administers the US aid programme, to back Madagascar's strategy reflects a broader trend among the world's largest donor countries. Despite some hesitancy and half-steps, the US, UK, France, Belgium and numerous others have pledged not only to give significantly more aid to Africa in the coming years, but also to increasingly aim that assistance at the MDGs and other development goals identified by African countries themselves.



UN / Evan Schneider

The report of the UK's Commission for Africa provides "a major boost to international dialogue on policy and actions in support of Africa," says UN Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari.

It is the beginning of a "more positive relationship between Africa and the West," former South African President Nelson Mandela said during a visit to the US in May. But much more needs to be done, he added. "The US and other donor nations should provide substantially greater economic assistance on terms that are more flexible and responsive to the priorities set by Africans themselves."

No longer 'unrealistic'

The shift in donor practices, after nearly a decade of declining aid to Africa, has picked up considerable momentum this year. In January, the UN Millennium Project called for doubling aid to the world's poorest countries, to enable them to take stronger steps towards achieving the MDGs.

Then in March, the Commission for Africa, chaired by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, advanced a similar notion. Its report argued that for Africa to be able to make essential investments to improve economic growth and the lives of its poorest people, it will need an additional $25 bn in aid by 2010, or twice the current level. In order to use that aid effectively, said the report, African countries must strengthen democracy, combat corruption and enhance performance, as projected under the African Union's development framework, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Meanwhile, donors should do their part to "significantly improve the quality of aid and how it is delivered," while also opening their domestic markets to goods exported by Africa.

UN Under-Secretary General and Special Adviser on Africa Ibrahim Gambari welcomed the report as "a major boost to international dialogue on policy and actions in support of Africa." He noted that when NEPAD was first adopted by African leaders in 2001, it estimated that the continent would need about $64 bn a year in external resources, a figure that "was derided as unrealistic." But if donors follow through on the recent calls to double aid, total assistance would climb to about $50 bn a year. And if the Commission for Africa's proposal for an additional increase of $25 bn after 2010 is accepted, that would bring the total to $75 bn a year.

Then in April, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) threw their own significant influence behind the calls for more aid. In a joint *Global Monitoring Report*, the two international financial institutions argued that official

World Bank / Yosef Hadar

Madagascar's development strategy focuses on rural areas, and donors have agreed to support that priority.

development assistance (ODA) "must at least double in the next five years to support the MDGs, particularly in low-income countries and sub-Saharan Africa." The report added that the pace of the increase in aid should be "aligned with recipients' absorptive capacity," that is, their ability to use the funds effectively. It also noted that a "big push" of aid will not be the sole answer, but must be accompanied by trade reform and other policies promoting private capital flows, technology transfer, security and environmental protection.

Africa has made considerable progress in recent years, says World Bank Vice-President for Africa Gobind Nankani. This has been reflected in greater economic growth in a number of countries, "stronger ownership" of the MDGs and action by the African Union to combat rural poverty and hunger and promote peace, regional integration, infrastructure and agriculture. But since the continent still lags far behind in achieving the MDGs, Mr. Nankani adds, Africa's own endeavours need to be complemented by "a bold international effort."

That point was also emphasized at the annual meeting of African finance ministers in Abuja, Nigeria, in May, devoted specifically to the MDGs. Mr. K.Y. Amoako, executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, which organized the meeting, stated: "We need to see significant progress from leading developed countries toward meeting their existing [aid] commitments, as well as helping to accelerate progress by concretely contributing to Africa's MDG financing needs."

According to Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu, chairman of the NEPAD Steering Committee, that African plan will itself "be judged by progress towards the MDGs." With Africa's partners pledging to do more, "The potential for genuine change has never been greater."

The road is not likely to be straight or smooth, however. Although the European Union has endorsed Mr. Blair's call for doubling aid to Africa, he encountered reluctance from the US during a June visit to Washington to prepare for the summit meeting of the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialized nations in Scotland, in July. US President George Bush did not agree to a doubling of aid to Africa, although he did pledge to provide the continent with an unspecified amount of "additional resources," as well as support for fully cancelling Africa's debt to the World Bank and the IMF.

A bigger slice of a bigger pie

Since the Millennium Summit in 2000, overall aid to Africa has been rising. The turn of the century marked an end to the decade-long decline in ODA flows to the continent. By 2003, the last year for which accurate estimates are available, total net ODA disbursements to Africa had climbed to $26.3 bn, reported the industrialized countries' Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in its annual *Development Cooperation Report*, released in April.

That was 68 per cent higher than the amount Africa received the year of the summit, a remarkable increase in such a short time (see graph). The amount is expected to increase further in the coming years. According to projections based on the pledges of the 22 donor countries belonging to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), donors will give a total of $88.4 bn in aid worldwide by 2006, some $19.4 bn more than in 2003. If sub-Saharan Africa keeps its current share, that will mean billions more for the region.

Moreover, the continent's slice of the total aid pie has been growing. In 1997–98, sub-Saharan Africa received 35 per cent of net ODA disbursements by the DAC countries. By 2002–03, this share had climbed to 41 per cent.

To some extent, the greater donor focus on Africa has come because of progress in other regions. In 2003, net aid to India fell below $1 bn, the lowest level since the 1970s, thanks to stronger economic growth and advances in reducing poverty there. Aid to China was down by two-thirds from the early 1990s, while Thailand, once a large recipient, for the first time repaid more on concessional aid loans than it received.

A number of donors have also chosen to target more of their aid towards low-income countries, and in the process Africa has become more central. Canada, for example, has announced that it will double its overall aid levels by 2010 and to Africa by 2008–09. In April, it added that these allocations would be focused more tightly on just 25 countries, chosen on the basis of their poverty levels, their capacity to use the aid effectively and Canada's own ability to have an impact. Of the 21 countries already selected, 14 are in Africa. "This shows that Canada sees the struggle against poverty as important," commented Canada's Ambassador to Burkina Faso Denis Briand. "And a good number of the least developed countries are in Africa."

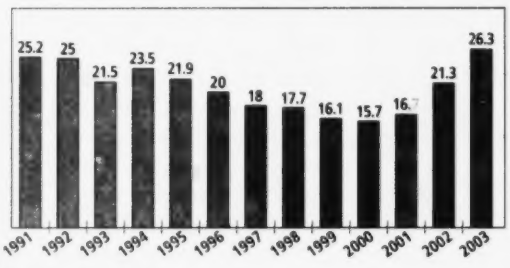
Already in 2002–03 seven of the DAC countries were giving half or more of their overall aid to sub-Saharan Africa. Although the US allocated only 36 per cent of its aid to Africa in 2003, it was the largest single donor in absolute terms, providing nearly $4.6 bn that year. France, which gave 58 per cent of its aid to the region, came in second at $2.4 bn.

But on closer inspection . . .

While welcomed by many Africans, the increase in nominal aid flows to Africa is not, in reality, as dramatic as it appears. According to DAC rules, donor countries may report debt relief as part of their aid disbursements. For sub-Saharan Africa specifically, total debt forgiveness rose by $4.3 bn between 2001 and 2003. Even though such debt relief helps countries save money that would otherwise have been paid out to creditors, it does not represent

Aid to Africa

Net ODA disbursements, US$ bn*



* In current US dollars.

Source: UN Africa Renewal from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data.

tangible new inflows, despite its impact on the aid statistics.

"At the time such loans are written off, they are counted at full face value," explains DAC Chairman Richard Manning. "It does not reflect a real transfer of resources."

Emergency relief assistance, which is also counted in the ODA figures, has likewise increased in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2001 and 2003 this portion of aid rose by $1.6 bn. If debt relief, emergency assistance and a small increase in food aid are excluded, according to DAC calculations, sub-Saharan Africa received only $600 mn in additional money for development purposes in that period.

Of the aid that is provided, how much is targeted towards areas that would help tackle the MDGs? The OECD report examined the actual allocation of donor assistance to sectors that might advance the MDGs. It found that only 8.1 per cent of total ODA, or 12.7 per cent of the aid disbursed by sector, went to those priorities in 2002.

An especially striking finding was that aid for water supply and sanitation has actually been declining, despite the MDG emphasis on expanding access to clean water and sanitation. Globally, the share of aid for water within bilateral donors' sectoral allocations fell from 9 per cent in 1999–2000 to 6 per cent in 2001–02, bringing bilateral commitments, in real terms, to their lowest level since 1985.

The 'metric' for measuring success

"The increase of aid to finance MDG needs in the poorest countries to date has been modest," outgoing World Bank President James Wolfensohn observed in a note to the annual spring meeting of the World Bank and the IMF in April. "We must not lose sight of the target of increasing aid to help countries meet the MDGs," he emphasized. "That is the metric against which to measure success or failure."

While all donors need to target more assistance towards activities that can reduce poverty, increase school enrolment and make progress on other MDG targets, the World Bank and IMF should better tailor their own policy interventions to reflect national priorities, the two institutions said in their *Global Monitoring Report*.

To date, 33 sub-Saharan countries have adopted Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) supported by the World Bank and the IMF. Some African critics have noted that these incorporate a number of the market-driven policies that featured prominently in the old structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s. But now the two international financial institutions agree that the PRSPs should reflect the MDGs "more centrally" and that their own assistance should be in "alignment" with the MDG framework.

To build momentum for the MDGs, especially in Africa, the report recommends significantly "scaling up" human development services such as education, health care and water and sanitation. With funding from both national governments and external sources, says the report, Africa will need to triple its current number of doctors, nurses and community health workers by 2015.

Touching on one of the priorities of NEPAD, the report also notes that investment in physical infrastructure — water facilities, roads, railways and communications systems — will have to increase over the next decade from the current annual level of about 4.7 per cent of gross domestic product to 9.2 per cent. That will require about $20 bn in yearly infrastructure spending, with about $10 bn coming from additional external financing. The private sector can play a role, notes Mr. Wolfensohn. But he adds that "the bulk of the increase in infrastructure investment, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, will need to come from the public sector."

Building capacity

For a long time, donors expressed reluctance to give greater aid to Africa because of concerns about corruption and the limited capacity of African institutions to effectively use more aid. But with greater action to combat corruption in an increasing number of African countries, those concerns have lessened somewhat.

Some donors are also viewing the issue of capacity in a different light. The World Bank/IMF report asserts that given current progress in institutional reform, sub-Saharan Africa "could effectively use a doubling of aid over a five-year timeframe." And where capacity still falls short, a portion of aid flows should be explicitly targeted towards helping to build up that capacity.

One example cited by the report involves trade. Aside from improving access to their own markets for African exports, donor countries should give more "aid for trade," to help Africans overcome their "lack of trade capacity and competitiveness."

The G-8 summit meeting in July will provide an important occasion for further movement on aid flows, debt relief, market access and other issues crucial to Africa. "This will be a historic opportunity for the G-8 to demonstrate its political will," said Mr. Mandela. "Africa and its people expect nothing less. We mean it when we say: Africa's time has come." ■

Poverty remains widespread across Africa, and a consensus is developing among donor countries and institutions that the continent needs much more support.

Moving 'from rhetoric to action'

UN panel on NEPAD highlights aid quality, private sector

Africa deserves and requires more external assistance to ensure the success of its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), argues a special advisory panel on international support for Africa. "NEPAD cannot succeed without a significant increase in support from the international community," said Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the chair of the panel, who submitted its recommendations to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 3 June.

Not only do developed countries need to increase their support in such diverse areas as aid, debt relief, market access and capital flows, says the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on International Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development, but they also must ensure that such backing is coordinated and that progress in one area is not counteracted by shortfalls in another.

Similar calls for more aid to Africa have been raised in other recent reports. Chief Anyaoku acknowledged in an interview with *Africa Renewal*. But his panel not only urges the various actors to move "from rhetoric to action" — as the report is entitled; it also places a greater emphasis on the quality of the aid that is given. "The grant element to these aid flows should be much higher than the 25 per cent which seems to have been generally assumed."

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Chief Emeka Anyaoku (right), chair of the advisory panel, with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Another feature is that the advisory panel puts a stronger accent on the role of the private sector in unleashing Africa's development potential. "Entrepreneurship is common in Africa," Mr. Anyaoku said. Small- and medium-scale enterprises need more help from both governments and external partners "to ignite them."

In his preface to the panel's report, he similarly emphasizes that Africa's development "requires harnessing the creativity and dynamism of private initiative in a range of areas, including agriculture, industry, science and technology, and infrastructure development." He adds that strengthening private initiative will also require "an efficient, supportive and capable public sector."

In addition, Mr. Anyaoku told *Africa Renewal*, the panel stresses "the importance of African leaders living up to their commitments on NEPAD, their commitment to improving their economic and political governance."

'A new opportunity'

Africa and the international community had previous development strategies for the continent, but "none of them lived up to the promises made," the report observes. It adds, however, that a "new opportunity" now exists with NEPAD. Today, most African leaders are democratically elected and more than two dozen governments have agreed to have their governance policies scrutinized under NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism. There also is greater consensus within the development community on what needs to be done and foreign assistance has been focusing to an increasing extent on countries pursuing good policies.

After consulting with a wide range of prominent figures from African countries, donor agencies and multilateral institutions, the panel is recommending a number of key external actions that would be most effective in advancing the priorities of NEPAD and helping Africa make progress towards the world community's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Those recommendations include:

Greater, more focused aid: The panel "fully endorses" recent calls by the Group of Eight industrialized countries, the UN Millennium Project team, the UK's Commission on Africa and others for a substantial increase in overall flows of development aid, with at least half of that assistance channeled to sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, aid should be targeted at African countries with good policy environments. Donor agencies should better coordinate their interventions, align them with poverty-reduction strategies, provide a significantly greater percentage of aid in the form of grants and make sustained commitments, on a multi-year basis.

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Members of advisory panel

The UN Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on International Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development was appointed in July 2004. In addition to its chair, ***Chief Emeka Anyaoku***, who is a former secretary-general of the Commonwealth, it includes 12 other prominent African and international figures. They are:

Mr. Jagdish Bhagwati (India), a well-known economist

Mr. Kwesi Botchwey, a former finance minister of Ghana

Mr. Richard Jolly, a former deputy executive-director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Ms. Anne Kristin-Sydnes, a former minister of development cooperation of Norway

Mr. Michel Camdessus (France), a former managing director of the International Monetary Fund

Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, a former anti-apartheid leader in South Africa

Mr. Misaki Miyaji, executive vice-president of the Mitsubishi Corporation of Japan

Prof. Fantu Cheru (Ethiopia), a professor at American University in Washington, DC

Prof. Ricardo Hausmann, a former minister of finance of Venezuela and ex-chief economist of the Inter-American Development Bank

Ms. Carol Lancaster, a former US deputy assistant secretary of state for Africa

Dr. Julienne Ngo Som, a former minister of social affairs in Cameroon

Dr. Ismail Serageldin (Egypt), a former vice-president for sustainable development at the World Bank

NEPAD MONITOR

Accelerating Africa's agriculture plan

African governments generally agree that "agriculture must lead economic development," Ghanaian President John Kufuor told African and international officials and farm experts meeting in Accra. "But the sad truth is that Africa does not seem to have the know-how to let this happen, and the agricultural sectors are inadequately supported."

The conference, held 5–6 May, was called to push forward implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). First released in 2003 as part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the continental development plan, the CAADP aims to address Africa's agricultural needs, such as greater funding and for access to appropriate farming technologies and knowledge.

Getty Images / Charles Mikejan

NEPAD's agricultural plan aims to boost farm productivity, to help spur development and reduce hunger.

The more than 200 delegates — from African governments, key donor agencies, farmers' organizations and agribusinesses — agreed that Africa's five regions should identify and begin implementing early actions over the next 12 months, to give momentum to the CAADP. Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu, executive head of the NEPAD Secretariat, based in South Africa, emphasized that these regional groups should integrate into their decision-making all key agricultural stakeholders.

Initial proposals for such actions were already raised during five regional CAADP meetings held during the early months of 2005. For example, the mid-February meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), in Maputo, Mozambique, highlighted programmes to expand small-scale irrigation and water harvesting, reform land-tenure laws and help build the capacity of farmers' organizations. Ms. Emily Sikazwe, executive director of a Zambian civil society organization, Women for Change, stressed measures to redress rural gender inequalities by improving women's access to land, credit and education.

One of the concrete proposals endorsed in Maputo was taken up by the Accra conference and recommended for all five regions: establishment of a budget-tracking system to determine how much African governments are actually spending on agricultural activities. African heads of state agreed in 2003 that about 10 per cent of their budgets should go to agriculture, but since that spending is currently scattered among different parts of national budgets, it is often difficult to monitor the extent to which countries are progressing towards the target.

The Accra meeting also underscored the need for Africa's external partners to allocate more of their assistance to the CAADP's four priorities: expanding areas under sustainable land and water management, improving agricultural infrastructure and market access, increasing food supply and reducing hunger, and strengthening dissemination of agricultural research and technologies.

The World Bank has agreed to provide an initial $60 mn for multi-country agricultural productivity programmes in the countries of SADC and the Economic Community of West African States. The African Development Bank will provide $150 mn for SADC irrigation programmes. At the Maputo meeting, a representative of the US Agency for International Development reported that US aid to agriculture has increased by a third between 2001 and 2005.

Boosting Africa's agricultural productivity is the "combined responsibility" of both Africans and their development partners, Prof. Richard Mkandawire, NEPAD's agriculture adviser, stressed at the Accra meeting. Raising productivity will contribute not only towards reaching the goal of an average agricultural growth rate of 6 per cent a year, but also help ensure that 200 million Africans "do not further suffer food insecurity."

Towards the Millennium goals

The African Union (AU) and the NEPAD Secretariat are seeking to help the continent prepare for a high-level summit of the UN General Assembly in September to decide on action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). African countries are planning to hold their own MDG review meeting, just before the AU's 4–5 July heads of state summit in Tripoli, Libya, which is expected to develop an African Common Position for presentation to the UN meeting.

Putting forward such a position, says the NEPAD Secretariat, will "send a strong message to Africa and the international community that Africa and its leaders not only take the MDGs seriously, but are prepared to take the lead in helping African countries meet the goals." NEPAD, from its inception, incorporated

the MDG targets as its own, so that the African plan focuses not only on core economic and political development goals, but also on enhancing the well-being and capacities of Africans.

The NEPAD Secretariat is overseeing the preparation of five regional MDG reports for North, West, Central, East and Southern Africa, as well as for some individual countries that are at the highest risk of not meeting the MDGs. These will feed into the preparation of the continent-wide report. Special case studies will also examine the challenges that HIV/AIDS and peace and security pose in meeting the MDGs in Africa.

"The significance of the year and the unprecedented opportunities Africa has to influence the development agenda," says the NEPAD Secretariat, "make it imperative that Africa speaks with one voice for a common response to meeting the MDGs across the continent." ■

Ghana sets pace on peer review

Ghana, one of the first four countries to submit themselves to outside scrutiny under NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), became the very first to complete its national self-assessment report, in March. The three other countries under review are Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Under the APRM, participating countries agree to have their practices on democracy, human rights, the fight against corruption and other areas of political and economic governance reviewed through a consultative process that involves outside African experts and representatives of the national government, civil society, private sector and others.

The Ghanaian government not only moved quickly to finish its own self-assessment report — one of the first steps in a national review — but also decided to grant autonomy to the National APRM Governing Council, which is chaired by Prof. Samuel Kwesi Adjepong and oversees preparation of the consultations. Four independent Ghanaian institutions have been designated to guide the process: the Centre for Democracy and Development, the Private Enterprise Foundation, the Centre for Economic Policy Analysis and the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research.

A delegation of the APRM Secretariat visited Ghana in April. It included nationals from 12 African countries and was led by Mr. Chris Stals, former head of the South African Reserve Bank and a member of the APRM's panel of eminent persons. While in Ghana, the delegation met with trade union leaders, academics, members of parliament, the Committee on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, the Serious Frauds Office and many others. It also visited a number of Ghana's regional capitals to meet with local stakeholders. ■

NEPAD panel: 'from rhetoric to action'

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Wider debt relief: Since the debt-servicing payments of poor African countries remain far too high and existing debt-relief mechanisms have not solved the problem, the panel recommends 100 per cent debt cancellation for all low-income countries in Africa, including for those not currently eligible for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. In addition, it calls for "significant relief" for middle income countries heavily in debt. More care must also be taken that the money saved from such relief is used by African countries to advance the development objectives enshrined in the MDGs.

Freeing trade: The panel recognizes that the freeing of trade can play an important role in Africa's development, and that African nations and their trade partners alike need to do more. African countries that are net exporters of agricultural goods would benefit from reductions of domestic agricultural subsidies in the European Union and US. But net importers could be harmed in the short term and would require assistance to help them adjust. As Mr. Anyaoku explained to *Africa Renewal*, for these importers "some special measures would need to be put into place to protect them against the sudden rise in prices that would follow with the ending of agricultural subsidies." Meanwhile, the international community should allocate more aid to build up Africa's infrastructure, in order to help stimulate trade and exports.

Enhanced private capital flows: Africa needs more private capital flows, the panel observes, citing one of the objectives of NEPAD. Developed countries should promote policies that encourage more flows of foreign direct investment and private remittances to Africa, suggests the panel. African countries themselves also need to do more to improve their investment climates, and both developed countries and multilateral agencies can help by providing technical and financial assistance for those efforts.

Better external coordination: The panel notes that the problems of lack of coordination that plague bilateral aid agencies "also tend to afflict the operations of the UN system in Africa." It therefore calls on the various components of the UN system to make greater efforts to work together to provide focused and coordinated support to NEPAD. Towards that end, says Chief Anyaoku, the role of the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) should be expanded. The panel further argues that the UN and the African Union need to act in greater partnership to improve monitoring of international pledges and aid disbursements to Africa.

The panel itself intends to prepare a supplementary report in early 2006 to assess progress in international support for Africa's development, by looking specifically at the outcomes of upcoming international summits, including the Group of Eight, the European Union and the MDG review summit of the UN General Assembly.

Success, Chief Anyaoku adds, cannot be measured solely by the number of consultations, meetings and plans, but also by concrete outcomes. "People's lives must change," he says. "International support must yield results-based action that unleashes Africa's human potential and the economic potential of the formal and informal private sector." ■

Africa's media pushes for more freedom

from page 3

the Internet, satellite telecommunications and inexpensive broadcasting and printing equipment, have given citizens access to a greater range of views.

Stronger human rights institutions

The emergence of new and more effective regional institutions, including the African Union (AU) and its development plan, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), have also improved the press climate.

Although freedoms of expression and of the press are now recognized as preconditions for democracy and development, those rights are insufficiently protected in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1986 African Charter for Human and Peoples' Rights. While both charters assert a human right to receive and disseminate information, there is no explicit mention of freedom of the press. To Ms. Titus, this is not surprising in manifestos drafted by and for governments. "Governments are not going to be very vocal in terms of freedom of expression."

To overcome these deficiencies, African journalists and broadcasters met in Windhoek, Namibia, in April 1991 under the auspices of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to adopt a declaration calling for "the establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press" and "the end of monopolies of any kind."

African initiatives

The Windhoek declaration was followed by a decade of advocacy, protests and organizing throughout the continent. Professional associations and watchdog groups now include MISA, the West African Journalists Association (with chapters in 16 countries) and the East African Journalists Association, among others.

In 2002, African journalists, with the support of many of Africa's new democracies, made a significant advance with the adoption by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights of the "Banjul Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa." The declaration, which is legally binding on signatories to the new African Court of Justice, gives statutory force to freedoms of expression and of the press.

Coverage of Ghana's December 2004 elections: A pluralistic media helps keep citizens better informed.

Cameroonian journalist Pius Njawe notes that "the creation of regional infrastructures to deal with press freedom issues ... is helping to establish democracy in Africa. African journalists continue to garner public support at home and abroad."

Freedom of the press is also enshrined in NEPAD's Declaration on Democracy, which commits African governments to "ensure responsible freedom of expression, inclusive of freedom of the press." Media freedom and diversity are among the standards considered by NEPAD's peer review mechanism in assessing a country's commitment to human rights and good governance.

"It is a major feat for the African media that the AU and the African Commission have adopted the Banjul Declaration," says Ms. Titus. "It has opened up a new arena for advocacy and enforcement. And it is the initiative of African journalists and governments themselves." MISA is among the parties to the first media freedom case brought before the African Court — a challenge to Zimbabwe's closure of several independent newspapers under the recent Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Responsibility and solidarity

Ms. Titus calls on the UN and the international community to develop a stronger partnership with African media activists and to provide more political and technical support. She adds that certain kinds of external pressures on African governments have sometimes been counterproductive, as in the Western preoccupation with Zimbabwe, which has not only been at cross-purposes with local media campaigns, but has also served to divert attention from violations of media rights in other countries.

Where the international community can be most helpful, she suggests, is in improving the professionalism of the African media through increased training and professional exchanges.

The media's lack of capacity, Ms. Titus, concludes, is itself a threat to freedom in Africa. She notes that some media outlets were deeply involved in instigating the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and that similar media abuses have occurred in other countries. "We accept that the media too has duties and obligations, and that some preconditions for the media must be met. But we remind governments that they must help create those conditions. It is no good to withhold information and then complain about bad reporting. I think more and more governments appreciate that." ■

AFRICA BOOKS

The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time by Jeffrey D. Sachs (Penguin, New York, USA, 2005; 397 pp; pb $27.95)

Dynamiques des conflits et crises de développement en Afrique Centrale, ed. Mbaya Kankwenda (Editions Duboiris, Paris, France, 2004; 452 pp)

The Global Women's Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies by Peggy Antrobus (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 256 pp; hb £32.95, $55, pb £9.99, $17.50)

Southern Africa in World Politics: Local Aspirations and Global Entanglements by Janice Love (Westview Press, Boulder, CO, USA, 2005; 235 pp; pb $24)

Regulating Mining in Africa: For Whose Benefit? ed. Bonnie Campbell (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden, 2004; 89 pp; SEK100, €10, £7.95)

Shea Butter Republic: State Power, Global Markets, and the Making of an Indigenous Commodity by Brenda Chalfin (Routledge, Oxford, UK, 2004; 320 pp; hb $90)

Vote et démocratie dans l'Egypte contemporaine by Sarah Ben Nefissa and Alâ Al-dîn Arafat (Karthala, Paris, France, 2005; 286 pp; €25)

Reinventing Order in the Congo: How People Respond to State Failure in the Congo, ed. Theodore Trefon (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 224 pp; hb £45, $75, pb £14.95, $22.50)

WTO and the Global Trading System: Development Impacts and Reform Proposals by Martin Khor et al (Zed Books, London, UK, 2005; 192 pp; hb £45, $69.95, pb £14.95, $25)

Globalization — Tame It or Scrap It? by Greg Buckman (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 256 pp; hb £32.95, $55, pb £9.99, $17.50)

Addressing the Challenges of Globalization: An Independent Evaluation of the World Bank's Approach to Global Programs by Uma Lele (World Bank Publications, Washington, USA, 2005; 120 pp; pb $20)

Balancing the Development Agenda: The Transformation of the World Bank under James Wolfensohn, 1995-2005 (World Bank Publications, Washington, USA, 2005; 120 pp; pb €15.04)

Le temps des journalistes : L'invention de la presse en Afrique francophone by Thierry Perret (Karthala, Paris, France, 2005; 320 pp; €25)

Africa's Media, Democracy and the Politics of Belonging by Francis B. Nyamnjoh (Zed Books, London, UK, 2005; 320 pp; hb £55, $85; pb £16.95, $25)

Who Owes Who? 50 Questions about World Debt by Damien Millet and Eric Toussaint (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 240 pp; hb £32.95, $55, pb £9.99, $17.50)

Undermining Development: The Absence of Power among Local NGOs in Africa by Sarah Michael (Indiana University Press, Indiana, USA, 2005; 218 pp; pb $22.95)

Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa, ed. Linda Chisholm (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 340 pp; hb £50, $75)

Beyond Territory and Scarcity: Exploring Conflicts over Natural Resource Management, eds. Quentin Gausset, Michael A. Whyte and Torben Birch-Thomsen (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden, 2005; 218 pp; pb SEK220, €22, £26.95)

An Economic Blueprint for Ghana by T.E. Anin (Woeli Publishing Services, Accra, Ghana, 2003; 159 pp; pb £17.95, $35.95)

The Roots of the Military-Political Crises in Côte d'Ivoire by Francis Akindès (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden, 2004; 46 pp; SEK90, €9)

Structural Adjustment: The SAPRI Report. The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis, Poverty and Inequality by the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 256 pp; hb £59.95, $75, pb £16.95, $25)

La coopération décentralisée et ses paradoxes by Alain Marie (Karthala, Paris, France, 2005; 232 pp; €22)

Endgame in the Western Sahara: What Future for Africa's Last Colony by Toby Shelley (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 240 pp; hb £45, $69.95, pb £14.95, $22.50)

African Emerging Markets by Sam Mensah and Todd Moss (African Capital Markets Forum, 2004; 287 pp; pb £29.95)

Learning to Love Africa: My Journey from Africa to Harvard Business School and Back by Monique Maddy (HarperBusiness, New York, US, 2004; 368 pp; hb $24.95)

Participation — From Tyranny to Transformation? Exploring New Approaches to Participation and Development, eds. Samuel Hickey and Giles Mohan (Zed Books, London, UK, 2004; 304 pp; hb £50, $75, pb £15.95, $25)

Reasonable Radicals and Citizenship in Botswana: The Public Anthropology of Kalanga Elites by Richard Weber (Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, USA, 2004; 268 pp; pb $24.95, hb $60)

AFRICA AGENDA

19–21 July 2005, UN Headquarters New York (USA) — International Conference for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. The conference will address the role of civil society and NGOs in the prevention of armed conflicts. Contact Guido de Graaf Bierbrauwer, tel (31 30) 242 7777, fax (31 30) 236 9268, e-mail <g.bierbrauwer@conflict-prevention.net>, website <www.gppac.net>.

24–27 July 2005, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) — Third International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Pathogenesis and Treatment. Tel (41 22) 7 100 800, fax (41 22) 7 100 899, e-mail <secretariat@iasociety.org>, website <www.ias-2005.org>.

25–29 July 2005, Edinburgh (UK) — E-Commerce Africa. Aims to profile the best of e-commerce and develop an action plan for e-commerce on the continent. Contact Alison Holms, e-mail <Alison@tsunamievents.co.uk>, website <www.ecommerceafrica2005.com>.

12–14 August 2005, Georgia (USA) — 2005 Shea Butter Convention. Organized by the American Shea Butter Institute. Contact Addie Jackson, tel (404) 377-6199, website <www.sheainstitute.com>.

22–27 August 2005, Ontario (Canada) — Third International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture for Food, Energy and Industry. Organized by the International Council for Sustainable Agriculture. Contact John Yee, fax (905) 688-0748, e-mail <conference@icsagr-fei.org>, website <www.icsagr-fei.org/conference>.

7–9 September 2005, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (UK) — Globalizations, Critical Horizons: Global Poverty or Global Justice? Organized by *Globalizations Journal*, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. E-mail <global.conference@ncl.ac.uk>, website <www.globaljusticeconference.org/information.asp>.

14–16 September 2005, UN Headquarters New York (USA) — 2005 World Summit. High-level Review of the 2000 Millennium Declaration, during the 60th Session of the General Assembly.

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

12–16 June 2005, Doha (Qatar) — Group of 77 and China Second South Summit. E-mail <G77-doha@mofa.gov.qa>, website <www.g77-doha.org>.

22–24 June 2005, Barcelona (Spain) — Africa Energy Forum. A forum, organized by EnergyNet Ltd., for African government ministers, utility executives and the international energy community to discuss business opportunities in Africa. Contact Rod Cargill, tel (44-20) 85 47 06 98, fax (44-20) 85 41 32 44, e-mail <Cargill@energynet.co.uk>, website <www.energynet.co.uk>.

28 June–2 July 2005, Lusaka (Zambia) — All-African Youth Summit. Organized by the Young Africans Welfare Association (YAWA). Contact the Summit Organizing Team, tel (260) 96 456 147, e-mail <contactyawa@yahoo.com>.

4 July 2005, London (UK) — Bending the Arc — The Business of Attaining the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. A forum for all stakeholders to mobilize resources for the MDGs, with a video link to the African Union summit in Tripoli and Group of Eight summit in Scotland. Organized by the NEPAD Secretariat, NEPAD Business Group and African Business Roundtable. Contact Thaninga Shope-Linney, tel: (27 11) 313 3776, fax: (27 11) 313 3778, website <www.nepad.org>.

6–8 July 2005, Perthshire (Scotland) — G8 Summit 2005. Website <www.g8.gov.uk>.

AFRICA IN BRIEF

International court to probe Darfur crimes

The world's first permanent war crimes court, the International Criminal Court, announced in June that it would begin investigating suspected crimes against humanity in the Darfur region of Sudan. The announcement follows a referral of the case by the UN Security Council and findings by an international commission of inquiry on Darfur established last October by Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The commission confirmed that war crimes and crimes against humanity had occurred in Darfur since fighting began in early 2003. Between 180,000 and 300,000 people may have been killed and 2.4 million made homeless. The commission provided sealed dossiers on 51 Sudanese individuals — some reported to be high-ranking government officials — deemed responsible for the violence. The government of Sudan has said, however, that it will not accept the court's jurisdiction.

In a statement, court prosecutors said their inquiries would be "impartial and independent, focusing on the individuals who bear the greatest criminal responsibility." The referral of the Darfur case was made possible when the US, which fiercely opposes The Hague-based court, did not exercise its veto powers as a permanent UN Security Council member.

The court conducted its first judicial proceedings in March in The Hague, capital of the Netherlands, with a pre-trial hearing on abuses carried out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a war that killed some 3 million people. It was set up in 2002 with the backing of 100 nations and can only operate in countries that have signed the treaty, unless authorized by the UN Security Council. The US declined to sign, saying it fears its nationals could be targeted by "frivolous" cases. ■

90 million more Africans could be infected by HIV by 2025

The cumulative number of new HIV infections in Africa could reach 90 million by 2025 if the response from African governments and their international partners is not stepped up, reports the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). In a study released in March, the agency paints three possible scenarios over the next two decades.

In the worst-case scenario, a failure by both African governments and the international community to respond effectively to the epidemic would see AIDS deplete resources and weaken infrastructure in many countries. Even if infection rates remain stable at about 5 per cent of the adult population, poverty across the continent would increase.

If African countries implement effective policies but foreign assistance does not rise, only about 24 million of the 90 million new infections would be prevented, UNAIDS calculates. While initiatives to support AIDS orphans would increase, the number of children orphaned by AIDS would almost double by 2025.

In the most optimistic scenario, with massive government and donor financing and treatment of those infected, 43 million new infections could be averted by 2025, the report notes. Africa's adult HIV prevalence rate would drop considerably and anti-retroviral coverage would reach 70 per cent.

"The scenarios are not predictions. They are plausible stories about the future," said UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot. "Millions of new infections can be prevented if Africa and the rest of the world decide to tackle AIDS as an exceptional crisis that has the potential to devastate entire societies and economies."

"Not only is strong leadership vital, strong health systems and development are also necessary in our quest to control the AIDS epidemic," former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda said at the report's launch. "AIDS is going to be around for a long time and needs consistent policy responses." ■

NEPAD 'e-schools' ready to roll

Between June and October 2005, a year-long "electronic schools" demonstration project will get under way in 20 African countries. Formulated by the e-Africa Commission of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the project is being supported and fully financed by 13 private companies. The goal is to integrate new information and communication technologies (ICTs), including computers and Internet usage, into the courses and curricula of African schools.

The participating countries were selected from the first 20 nations to join NEPAD's voluntary African Peer Review Mechanism, which monitors governance standards. Each of those countries was asked to designate six schools for the initial demonstration project and to free up instructors for training. As of early June, 16 countries had done so. Overall, some 150,000 African teachers and students will benefit from the training and from access to new communications hardware and software.

Among the companies supplying the equipment and training are Hewlett Packard-ZTE, Microsoft, Inmarsat, Oracle and Cisco. They and other companies have also agreed to ensure security and maintenance of the computers and other equipment during the demonstration phase, after which national governments will take over continued operation of the e-schools.

To gain sufficient experience for a subsequent "mass roll-out" phase in which ICTs will be systematically introduced into many more schools in more countries, the selection of participating schools was designed to a ensure a diversity of challenges. The selected schools "include urban and rural schools, with or without access to electricity, and for both female and male students," says Prof. Peter Kinyanjui, a programme coordinator of the e-Africa Commission.

Leaders of local communities will also be encouraged to take part at an early stage, so that ultimately the new e-schools can function as community resources. In addition, notes Prof. Kinyanjui, the training programmes will take into account the preferred languages of instruction in the given country and encourage greater use of local African languages. A number of African researchers and institutions have already developed software for using local languages. Moreover, members of Africa's diaspora, resident in other parts of the world, should also be involved in the e-schools project, to help strengthen the African content of the curricula. "That is the only way that Africans will be able to identify themselves closely, with what they are familiar with, rather than rely on borrowed curricula developed elsewhere," argues Prof. Kinyanjui.

AFRICA WATCH

AFRICA AND ASIA

Regions build stronger ties

Leaders from more than 100 African and Asian countries pledged to strengthen their ties at the Asian-African Summit held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in April. They noted that the current global situation and conditions in the two regions "necessitate the need to actively pursue a common view and collective action to ensure the equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization."

The leaders adopted the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership, a broad visionary document that calls for closer economic and social integration between the two continents and stepped-up cooperation in the fight against poverty, corruption and terrorism. Representing two thirds of the world's population, the leaders also pledged to work towards the world's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged them "to be as innovative and as visionary as your forebears were" by supporting his agenda for UN reform, outlined in his report *In Larger Freedom*, which contains proposals for change at the world body and calls for new commitments by the international community to deal with a broad range of development challenges.

The summit commemorated the first Asian-African Conference held half a century ago in 1955 in Bandung, 100 km from Jakarta. In Bandung, leaders pledged solidarity in the fight against colonialism and for economic development. The landmark Bandung Declaration adopted at that conference paved the way for the subsequent creation of the Non-Aligned Movement. ■

MALARIA

Disease costs Africa $12 bn a year

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that malaria is costing Africa about $12 bn annually and is hampering development efforts. "Malaria remains a major contributor to the disease burden in Africa," WHO Southern Africa regional director, Mr. Antoine Kaboré, said at an event marking Africa Malaria Day in Lusaka, Zambia, in April.

He said that about 80 per cent of the 1 mn malaria deaths recorded globally each year occur in Africa. "The burden on health systems, absenteeism among school children and diminished or lost worker productivity, all contribute to make malaria a significant contributor to low economic growth in endemic countries," he said.

This year's Africa Malaria Day was particularly symbolic as it marked the halfway point between 2000 — the year of the African Summit on Malaria in Abuja, Nigeria — and 2010, the year by which 44 African leaders at the summit pledged to halve the burden of malaria in Africa. The illness kills more than 800,000 Africans every year.

"Africa Malaria Day 2005 is intended to remind African leaders of the burden that malaria continues to place upon the continent and of the commitment that they made at the Abuja Summit," the WHO noted. The mid-term (2005) targets agreed in Abuja also include covering at least 60 per cent of vulnerable target groups through a combination of prevention and control methods.

Most countries will not achieve the Abuja mid-term targets at the end of the year, but there has been some progress. For example, 21 malaria-endemic countries have therapy based on artemisinin, a Chinese plant, considered the best method of treatment currently available. Some 20 countries have reduced tariffs and taxes on nets and insecticides against the mosquitoes that carry malaria, and 20 mn nets are now in use in the region. ■

APPOINTMENTS

UN

Mr. Ibrahim Agboola Gambari *of Nigeria has been appointed by the UN Secretary-General as the organization's new under-secretary-general for political affairs. He succeeded Mr. Kieran Prendergast, as of 1 July 2005, becoming the first African to hold this very influential position. Mr. Gambari, who was UN under-secretary-general and special adviser on Africa at the time of his appointment, previously served as special representative of the Secretary-General to Angola. A former external affairs minister of Nigeria and director-general of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, he also served as Nigeria's permanent representative to the UN.*

UNDP

Mr. Kemal Dervis*, a former finance minister in Turkey and senior official at the World Bank, has been appointed by the UN Secretary-General to a four-year term as administrator of the UN Development Programme. He takes over from Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, who was recently appointed as the Secretary-General's chief of staff. Mr. Dervis served for two years as Turkey's finance minister, in addition to a cabinet position as minister for economic affairs and the treasury. He also is a member of Turkey's parliament and of the Joint Commission of the European and Turkish Parliaments.*

World Bank

Mr. Paul Wolfowitz *assumed his duties as president of the World Bank Group on 1 June 2005, after winning approval of his nomination by the institution's Board of Executive Directors in March. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Wolfowitz served as US deputy secretary of defence, following earlier government appointments as under-secretary of defence for policy and US ambassador to Indonesia. He also served for seven years as dean and professor of international relations at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.*

Former European Union Trade Commissioner ***Pascal Lamy*** *has been selected as the new director-general of the World Trade Organization (WTO). He will take over from the current WTO head, Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, whose term ends on 31 August. Mr. Lamy began his career in the French civil service with various finance postings. From 1984 to 1994, he was chief of staff to the European Commission (EC) president. Mr. Lamy then joined Crédit Lyonnais, where he became director-general in 1999, the same year he became EC trade commissioner.*

UN

The UN General Assembly has appointed former Portuguese Prime Minister ***António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres*** *as the new UN High Commissioner for Refugees, following a recommendation by the UN Secretary-General. His three-year term came into effect on 15 June 2005. Mr. Guterres is currently president of the Socialist International, a position he has held since 1999. He was a member of the Portuguese parliament from 1976 to 1983 and from 1985 to 1995, and was a founding member of the Portuguese Refugee Council. Since 2003, he has also been an advisor to the board of Portugal's second largest bank, Caixa Geral de Depósitos.*